

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 16379 140408Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----011098 150331Z /73

R 131345Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4302
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16379

EXDIS

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR TOON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, UR, FR, US
SUBJECT: FRENCH EMBASSY SIT-IN; MFA OFFICIAL LIES ABOUT
U.S. EMBASSY PENTECOSTALIST CASE

REF: MOSCOW 16004 (NOTAL)

1. FRENCH EMBOFF CALLED ON POL COUNSELOR JULY 12 TO
GIVE US UPDATE ON FRENCH EMBASSY SIT-IN AND CONSULT
WITH US, ESPECIALLY ABOUT BALD-FACED LIE ABOUT OUR
PENTECOSTALISTS' CASE OFFERED TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR BY
CHIEF OF MFA'S FIRST EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT DUBININ ON
JULY 11.

2. ACCORDING TO SOURCE:

-- IMMEDIATELY AFTER ARMENIAN SURREPTIOUSLY
ENTERED FRENCH EMBASSY COMPOUND ON A SUNDAY (PRESUMABLY
JULY 1) MFA CALLED TO DEMAND THAT FRENCH EMBASSY HAND
OVER THIS "DANGEROUS MAN." SUBSEQUENTLY FRENCH
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COUNSELOR FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS HAD A GENERAL
"TENTATIVE" CONVERSATION ABOUT THE SITUATION WHICH AS
REPORTED IN REFTEL INCLUDED HEAVY ENCIRCLEMENT OF EMBASSY
BY SOVIET SECURITY PERSONNEL AND VEHICLES AS WELL AS
CONSPICUOUS SCRUTINY OF EMBASSY VEHICLES DEPARTING THE
EMBASSY COMPOUND.

-- AFTER CONSULTING WITH US ABOUT OUR PENTECOSTALIST SIT-INS, FRENCH EMBASSY RECEIVED INSTRUCTION TO AMBASSADOR DE LEUSSE TO APPROACH DUBININ WITH A SCENARIO UNDER WHICH ARMENIAN SIT-IN WOULD HOPEFULLY BE PERSUADED TO DEPART EMBASSY ON ASSURANCES THAT SHOULD HE RETURN TO APPLY FOR A FRENCH VISA THE EMBASSY WOULD ISSUE ONE (WITHOUT, APPARENTLY, GOING INTO THE QUESTION OF SOVIET EXIT PERMISSION).

-- DUBININ INITIALLY RESPONDED BY DEMANDING THAT THE FRENCH HAND OVER THE ARMENIAN BEFORE JULY 14, POINTEDLY NOTING THAT THE QUESTION OF SOVIET ATTENDANCE AT NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION WAS INVOLVED. DE LEUSSE RESPONDED THAT HE SAW NO RELEVANT CONNECTION; AFTER ALL, THERE HAD BEEN A GOOD SOVIET TURNOUT AT THE AMERICAN JULY 4 RECEPTION NOTWITHSTANDING THE PENTACOSTALIST SIT-INS.

-- DUBININ COUNTERED THAT THE TWO CASES WERE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT, BUT THAT HE COULD STATE NO MORE. WHEN PRESSED BY DE LEUSSE, HOWEVER, HE CLAIMED THAT IN THE PENTACOSTALIST CASE THE US EMBASSY HAD SAID THAT IT WAS NOT HOLDING THE PENTACOSTALISTS AND THAT IF THE SOVIET SIDE WANTED THEM IT WAS FREE TO ENTER THE EMBASSY AND PICK THEM UP. "BUT WE (SOVIETS) DON'T WANT TO TAKE THEM OUT."

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-- SHOCKED BY DUBININ'S REMARKS, DE LEUSSE SAID THAT THESE COMMENTS ON THE PENTACOSTALISTS CAME AS A SURPRISE; IN ANY CASE THE FRENCH WERE NOT HOLDING THEIR SIT-IN AGAINST HIS WILL.

-- SOURCE, WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE MEETING, SAID DUBININ ALSO ALLUDED TO POSSIBILITY THAT FRENCH EMBASSY WAS IN VIOLATION OF VIENNA CONVENTION AND SOVIET LAW.

3. POL COUNSELOR ASSURED SOURCE CATEGORICALLY THAT THIS EMBASSY HAD NOT AND WOULD NEVER IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES OFFER TO LET SOVIET AUTHORITIES INTO EMBASSY TO PICK UP SIT-INS.

4. COMMENT: FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND STAFF ARE CLEARLY TAKEN ABACK AT DUBININ'S BALD LIE OVER US HANDLING OF PENTACOSTALIST SIT-INS. AS SOURCE SAID, SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO DRIVE WEDGES BETWEEN FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES AND PLAY THEM OFF AGAINST ONE ANOTHER ARE STANDARD PRACTICE BUT THIS PLOY IS A SICKENING EXAMPLE OF LENGTH TO WHICH SENIOR SOVIET OFFICIALS WILL SOMETIMES GO. MEANWHILE THE FRENCH RECKON THAT THE ARMENIAN MAY CONTINUE

HIS SIT-IN WELL BEYOND BASTILLE DAY. HARASSMENT OF
FRENCH EMBASSY VEHICLES HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED AND THE
FRENCH ARE STILL TRYING TO KEEP A LID ON THE CASE
ALTHOUGH REALISTICALLY THE CHANCES OF LEAKAGE TO THE
PRESS ARE RISING STEADILY. MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS, EMBASSIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW16379
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780290-0278
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780764/aaaacccg.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8552da75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 16004
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2021703
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH EMBASSY SIT-IN; MFA OFFICIAL LIES ABOUT U.S. EMBASSY PENTECOSTALIST CASE
TAGS: PINT, UR, FR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8552da75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014